

# SOUTHERLY

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EDITORIAL.

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"I'm greedily looking for *Southerly* to grow more assertive", writes Mr. Rex Ingamells, in a letter from which we may pardonably quote. "I'll presume to express it as my opinion, too, that the ultimate value of *Southerly* will be (as regards Australian letters) in proportion to the impetus it affords Australianism." As is now well known, Mr. Ingamells was the founder, and remains the leader, of the Jindyworobak school of poets in South Australia. Four of their latest publications are reviewed in this issue. The "Jindyworobaks", as they have come to be called, believe in "Australia First"—in fact, one might almost say, "Australia Only". But their Australia is that of the aborigines, not that of the so-called usurpers, the white men; according to some of them—if this is not unfair—to be true Australians we must trace our culture back even to Alcheringha, the ancient native "dream-time" or period of primitive bliss. We must disown Europe, think and write only of our surroundings and true past.

This argument Mr. Hope, in his review of the publications mentioned, has answered: whether finally is for the reader to decide. It seems hardly likely that even his reduction to absurdity will daunt the Jindyworobaks, if they are progressing in the way he suggests. Meanwhile there is the question of *Southerly's* position as a literary magazine and its attitude to the controversy. Mr. Ingamells calls for a statement of that position; in effect challenges *Southerly* to become more national in the sense in which the "Jindyworobak Anthology", say, is national. This annual harbours no work that is alien to Australia in any way—at least such is the intention, for up to the present there seems to be no real origination of verse-forms, for example, in the collections; merely development from those already used in England and America. It may be doubted whether *Southerly* is altogether bound to accept such a challenge, and take a definite stand; but a few words of explanation, at least, may be given.



The title of the magazine was deliberately chosen to suggest its Australian character; and also, be it noted, chosen with some thought of its relation to England. The organ of an "Australian English Association" could not well do otherwise than attempt to maintain a relationship which, culturally, is surely all-important. If the contents of *Southerly* were to be limited to articles, poems, stories, of local interest, if no contributor to it were to be allowed to look beyond his own shores, then the peculiar status of the Australian author—which Mr. John Ingamells seems to recognise—as surveyor of the whole world from the vantage-point of its newest part, would be lost. He would be deprived of the inestimable benefit of being able to select just what he wants from abroad and here—to interpret English writers from the Australian point of view, to bring out in his verse the contrasts of land and character, to adapt and improve technique, to set past against present, and so on. Perhaps in no other nation is the writer in so favoured a position today. If he does not avail himself of his opportunities, it is his own fault. But to circumscribe himself, to disregard *our* antipodes, go to school to the aborigines, find his landscape at Alice Springs, would surely result in ingrowth and, finally, barrenness.

The Jindyworobaks may try it. Let them—with our blessing—go as far as they can. Already they have instituted something like a poetic renaissance in South Australia, and are stimulating enthusiasm elsewhere. But *Southerly*, so long as is possible, will remain non-exclusive, liberal towards the English as well as the Australian: will welcome both corroborree chants and critical appraisements of Joyce; will play its part in maintaining the cultural good relations that have hitherto subsisted between the mother and the daughter countries; and, by this means, will help to bring knowledge of Australian literature and literary endeavour, Australian linguistic variation, to English readers and writers. Thus shall we avoid any charge of regionalism, provincialism, not to say parochialism. And, by not tying ourselves, we may hope to escape finding ourselves tethered.

**ULYSSES v. THE MINISTER FOR "CUSTOMS".\***

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By IAN R. MAXWELL.

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I AM glad, Mr. Chairman, that you have explained the object of this meeting. We are not here to discuss the question of censorship in general, nor, of course, to attack the memory of the late Minister for Customs. He, I do not doubt, in banning *Ulysses*, did what appeared to him to be his duty. Indeed it is precisely this fact—and the fact that thousands of Australians would have thought and done the same thing in his place—that makes his action significant. We have here a conflict of radically opposed views, and it seemed to us that on this conflict the Department of English should throw what light it could.

But since points of view are personal matters and we often judge the view by our knowledge of the man, may I begin by giving you one relevant piece of information about myself?

You will recall that Sir John Falstaff was born about three of the clock in the afternoon with a white beard and something a round belly. I, on the other hand, was born about eleven a.m. wearing a small black bowler hat and my old school tie, and fully equipped with a set of unimpeachable High Tory opinions. At least, this fancy must have a certain poetical truth, for, think back as far as I will, I cannot remember the time when my outlook was not conservative. W. S. Gilbert tells us that we are all born little Liberals or little Conservatives; and that is profoundly true. Democrats and Totalitarians may be made—the latter with alarming rapidity—but your good conservative is not made: he is born. I was born a conservative; I tend to respect the past, to see what good I can in its legacy to the present, to distrust violent innovations; and if some of my opinions have become more radical as I have grown older, that is simply because experi-

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\* One of three addresses, under the general title of "James Joyce in Australia", delivered for the University Extension Board on October 17.



ence forces some such opinions on any man who does not deliberately padlock the doors of his mind.

And so, too, with books. I was brought up on what is sometimes contemptuously dismissed as "traditional" literature. I still deplore some excesses of the rabid modernists—their adolescent fear of the obvious, their splenetic cliquiness, their abandonment of "thinking" in favour of what our bright young sparks now call "cerebration". My favourite book is still, as it has been for some twenty years, Milton's *Paradise Lost*; and Boswell, Walter Scott, De Quincey, George Borrow, are a few of the other saints in my literary calendar. If, then, I now express my admiration for Joyce's *Ulysses*, I feel that I may at least claim not to be summarily condemned as a crank or a pervert.

But it appears to be dangerous to admire *Ulysses*. We have been told that it is subversive, blasphemous, and indecent. Let us glance at these charges.

Apart from a few low references by low characters to the British Empire and the Royal Family, I remember nothing politically subversive in the book. No doubt it might tend to unsettle the mind of that intellectually placid majority of which we run about 2,000 to the acre in our great cities, if there were much likelihood of their reading and understanding it. Fortunately, perhaps, there is not.

As for blasphemy, that undoubtedly exists. It exists as an incident of that deep and painful struggle between human nature and religious discipline which Joyce has recreated in his earlier novel, the *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and which remains one of the underlying themes of *Ulysses*. The blasphemy, then, is part of an essentially faithful presentation of an important human theme, and this should sufficiently justify, or at the least excuse, its presence.

Indecency, however, stands on a different footing. Blasphemy is not likely to shake faith: some forms of indecency may well weaken morals. And it cannot be denied that in *Ulysses* Joyce has not only given some completely frank reports of low life in Dublin, but has also (in the words of an admirer) emptied out the minds of more than one of

his characters "to their last dirty lees". He has driven through all accepted reticences, and I may even say that I find it difficult to think of a single unprintable word which he has not printed.

The question before us, then, is whether his book is unfit for intelligent adults to read—if they can. It will not corrupt the youth of Australia: it is too dear and too difficult for that. Apart from the few who have recently been digging in it for scandalous extracts, its readers are likely to be men and women of brains and determination. Is it fit reading for them?

Before we face this question, we may as well begin by clearing our minds of cant. We think of Literature in general as something noble—books commercing with the skies—and we very properly expect that those who expound great books in our academies shall be almost, if not quite, as respectable as if they were actually in holy orders. Those, on the other hand, by whom great books are written, are not infrequently men of a very different stamp. They may indeed be as respectable as Robert Bridges, but equally they may be as disreputable as Robert Burns, or Lord Byron, or Ovid, or Sappho, or François Villon. And their work is not always fit to be read from the pulpit. Let us admit that masterpieces are sometimes shocking, and that the complete works of Shakespeare and Chaucer, if known to the authorities, would be spared only for their venerable antiquity. Everyone who knows anything of literature knows this; but it remains a part of the humanist's faith that the expression in literature of the human spirit—flower and root and the dung that feeds them—is of value to men.

And now, if we are to judge *Ulysses* fairly, it is first desirable to understand it, although this is a qualification which seems recently to have been overlooked. It should be approached through the earlier and more autobiographical *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which is quite easy to understand and which introduces characters who appear again in *Ulysses*—Stephen Dedalus, who is Joyce himself, the bibulous and bitterly anti-clerical Mr. Dedalus, senior, and so on. What is more, it makes us realise the profound effect



of Joyce's early life and environment. We see his upbringing at a Jesuit school, his passionate feeling for the beauty of religion, the terrible conviction of sin and uncontrollable fear of hell which he suffers in the retreat, the violent struggle of a strongly sensual and strongly artistic and intellectual nature to free itself from restraint, and finally the hard-won resolution expressed in the last chapter:

Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

The scars of this conflict are visible in *Ulysses*. The rebel's desire to wreck old shrines, the harsh gargantuan laughter, the melancholy that darkens Stephen's deep sense of beauty, the aching recollection of adolescent shame that clings to his conception of sex—all these things are the marks of a mind that has been deeply troubled, and we are prepared to find *Ulysses* a painful as well as an engrossing book.

Even with this preliminary knowledge, however, it remains hard enough to understand. This, no doubt, is partly Joyce's fault. I must say that I share Professor Waldock's inability to see the point of many of Joyce's parodies, clever as they sometimes are; nor, I think, does it add anything to the effectiveness of the second last chapter that it is cast entirely in the form of questions and answers. I should agree that Joyce is often "a word-intoxicated man". He shares with Rabelais a sort of enormous creative high spirits that drive him to attempt gigantic tours de force, and sometimes, perhaps, make him enjoy bamboozling the simple reader.

Yet the principal and serious cause of Joyce's obscurity is something quite different: it lies in the almost insoluble structural problem with which he was faced.

Older critics used to speak of the "three unities" which a dramatist of the classical type was supposed to observe. These were the unities of time, place, and action. The action of a play should be confined to a single day and to a single city; and it should form a coherent story, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Now Joyce has observed the unities of time and place most scrupulously—everything that happens in *Ulysses* happens in one time (about twenty hours) and one



place (Dublin)—but he does so because he means to take the most extravagant liberties with the third and most important of the “unities”, the unity of action.

Some people imagine that *Ulysses* is merely an enormous “interior monologue”, the record of one man’s thoughts during one day. That would be a big enough subject, but it would have a certain natural unity and would be comparatively easy to manage. Joyce’s subject is very much bigger and more multifarious. Apart from the three people in whose minds we live for fairly long periods, there are a host of others with whom we have a slighter acquaintance, together with a wealth of local detail, allusion, gossip, which only a Dubliner could fully understand.

This wealth of material and intimate topical detail is necessary, for Joyce is trying, not to write a novel in the ordinary sense, but to recreate Life—both the outer world and the world of the mind—as it focusses itself in Dublin on the 16th June, 1904. But life is a shapeless affair—to pick a story out of it is like drawing one bucket of water from a river—whereas art is shapely. The problem, therefore, is to make the book hang together without imposing a limiting pattern.

The solution, of course, must involve a compromise—a compromise between the *flow* of life and the *shape* of art—but the distinctive thing about Joyce is that he is determined at all costs to preserve the former. The means by which he binds the materials of his book together are therefore subtle and various. For example, the incidents of Homer’s *Odyssey* provide a kind of scaffolding upon which the incidents of *Ulysses* can be built up, and we are made to feel, without realising it too clearly, that Leopold Bloom is an Odyssean wanderer through the ocean of a Dublin day.

But this matter is far too large to enter on at all fully. Let me content myself with one small specimen of Joyce’s constructive art. The tenth episode consists simply of a series of nineteen sketches (some of them less than a page in length) of Dublin life in the early afternoon. We see Father Conmee taking the tram and greeting people in the street, Mr. Bloom getting a book for his wife, a girl

selling flowers to Mr. Boylan, and so on. At first sight the scenes seem disconnected, yet one feels a certain unity of impression; and Gorman has shown how this is achieved by the repetition of certain phrases, the reappearance of certain persons—the sandwich-board men, the blind boy tapping down the street, and others. But there is one beautiful touch which he does not remark. At the end of episode eight Bloom has tossed into the Liffey a crumpled paper ball. We catch glimpses of it from time to time, as the nineteen “shots” of episode nine are thrown on the screen, drifting slowly down stream, past this wharf and that factory; so that the flowing river becomes the centre of the “composition”, and the paper ball is like the hour floating on the bosom of time. The sense of unity is here conveyed strongly, but with almost imperceptible subtlety.

Joyce, you see, is binding his materials together with a number of associative links, which are often not clearly perceived even where their effect is felt; and this method is of course appropriate in a book which is concerned above all with the inner life of the mind. More often than not Joyce is directly reporting what is sometimes called “the stream of consciousness”, with all that strange flotsam and jetsam of thoughts and images and impulses and jumbled words that normally float along with it. I give one very simple example—an extract from Mr. Bloom’s thought-stream shortly after he has helped a blind youth across the street:

Poor fellow! Quite a boy. Terrible. Really terrible. What dreams would he have, not seeing. Life a dream for him. Where is the justice being born that way. All those women and children excursion bean-feast burned and drowned in New York. Holocaust. Karma they call that transmigration for sins you did in a past life the reincarnation met him pike hoses. Dear, dear, dear. Pity of course: but somehow you can’t cotton on to them someway. (Chapter 7.)

Here some quite simple reflections on an incident which has just occurred are crossed (as they generally are in life) by associated thoughts and memories. The injustice of being born blind recalls the injustice of being suddenly destroyed like those women and children in the disaster which has just been reported from New York (and of which we find Father Conmee thinking a couple of chapters later). Then, since his mind is



curious and retentive, he thinks of the learned word "holocaust" which would be used to describe a disaster of this kind; and this naturally reminds him of a subject which he has been discussing a few hours ago, the transmigration of souls, and of his wife's mispronunciation of the learned "metempsychosis" ("met him pike hoses"). After that, his thoughts come back to blind people, and he reflects that, though one may pity them, there is something slightly repellent about them.

All this is really simple enough once you are familiar with it, and indeed a good part of the difficulty of the book disappears as you read yourself into it. You realise, with delighted comprehension, that you are gradually getting to know these people well enough to follow even the wayward movements of their minds; and perhaps the most undeniable proof of Joyce's success is this, that we do not merely assimilate the contents of a character's mind, we also recognise its distinctive way of working. Stephen Dedalus's mind moves, now in swift bitter stabs, now with prolonged effort; it interrupts itself with cynical asides, and through most of its musings one feels a sombre elegiac undertone. Bloom's mind is far simpler: it moves in brief phrases, quick and inquisitive like a sparrow picking grains from the path. Mrs. Bloom's mind flows unpunctuated, a tide of feelings and memories with no vestige of critical control.

Here, as it seems to me, Joyce has done something unique. I do not mean that he is the greatest novelist of all time. I mean simply that he has employed a new method of intimate portraiture—a "close-up" of the mind at work—which increases the range of the novelist's instrument, and has added something to that vision of humanity which art offers us. This should be ground enough for claiming that intelligent Australians, whether or not they are "students", should have access to his book. If art matters at all, then an artistic achievement of this magnitude is of importance for those who read fiction as well as for those who write it.

Now Joyce's indecency is, in large measure, a necessary incident of his achievement. If you report the whole mind of an average man through one long and rather lazy summer

day in the course of which he is sometimes drunk as well as sober, you are certain to shock even that average man himself. People protest—sometimes with too much fervour to be quite convincing—that their minds are not as Leopold Bloom's. I myself feel that Mr. Bloom is considerably more sensual than many of us, but after all Bloom is Bloom, and I do not feel that I can question the faithfulness of Joyce's portrait on the whole.

Joyce might no doubt have chosen to write instead about an Archbishop, or even a Minister of the Crown; but genius is not quite free to choose its subject. And if Joyce was led to write *Ulysses* partly because he was preoccupied with sex, we should remember that the impulses of sex are closely allied to the artist's appetite for life in all its forms. Those who most deplore Joyce's preoccupation often reveal a similar preoccupation themselves. They can see nothing but what is indecent. They do not seem aware that Joyce has made us feel with a new vigour and immediacy the whole life of the senses—whether it be the din and stink of a cheap restaurant, or smooth “palps” of fingers passing over the shaven face, or cattle thronging from fat pastures, or shirts “crucified” on a backyard line, or the wave flowing full to spend itself at last in “greengoldenly lagoons of sand”.

I have admitted many faults and wilful extravagances in Joyce, and I have assumed for purposes of argument that he has over-emphasised sex—grossly, if you like. But may I point out, that if he had published a book of orthodox sermons with an introduction by the Archbishop of Canterbury, we should not have had to call this meeting at all? The freedom which intelligent adults rightly demand is not freedom to browse at will among the classics of the Sunday School Library; and *Ulysses* is a work which, whatever its shortcomings, is too important a contribution to the art of the novel and to our understanding of life to be driven from our country, or confined in locked recesses for the perusal of certified “students”.



## TONGUE-TIKI.

O magical child of the coconut tree,  
disowned by thy mother and flung in the sea,  
Lord, here is my Will like a set of the tide  
to draw thee to land and to where thou shalt bide!

O magical babe that I bear in my heart,  
I weep that my Love and my love dwell apart!  
Thou shalt put out thy tongue that all chasms may span  
to lap us together in far Mayapan.

O magical babe that I bear in my breast,  
my heart is an ocean, a stranger to rest!  
Thou shalt put out thy tongue that shall calm its wild sea  
and shall bridge me across it to Hawaiki.

O magical babe that I bear in my womb,  
the throb of thy pulse is the Paddle of Doom!  
The mesh that is woven of Thee and of me  
is the Tapa Divine and the Robe of the Sea.

OPUA, 20.iii.39.

[Condensed statement must seem dogmatic. Making allowance, please note: the above is not solely nor strictly Polynesian, but portrays the Regeneration Mystery common to all cults. *Mau*i sprang parthenogenetically from his "mother's top-knot", the crown of the coco-palm, i.e., the *Aperture of Brahma*, or *foramen of Monro* of physical anatomy. *Tiki* is shown as a wry-necked foetus with protruding tongue or as a straight-necked or neckless dwarf with tongue even more exaggerated (Egyptian BES, Chinese PANKU, Colombian KUPAN?). The former equates with our *Hanged Man* or crucified Redeemer, in the foetal or Old Adamic or unregenerate stage, a rôle portrayed by the bird "wryneck" in the earliest European mysteries (Finn or Lapp?). The latter, the dwarf, is the risen Redeemer, also the initiated candidate for Redemption . . . the extended tongue signifying sublimation of crude sexual, into time-and-space-annihilating magical, potency, and exaltation of consciousness generally. The spear of the Brow-emanating Minerva, the *Buddhi* emerging from the crown of the Taoist adept (see Wilhelm's *Golden Flower* with Jung's preface), the Horus rising from the Lotus, and the Winged Hermes, also the Merlin, or Hobby (horse) of English May rites, and again the *Magical Child* of Boehme and the alchemists . . . all these equate with the *Tiki* concept, who, being cast into the sea in his foetal state, is also *Proteus* and *Aphrodite* (Maya).]

PETER HOPEGOOD.

## AUCTION SALE IN STANLEY STREET.

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By KYLIE TENNANT.

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THE auction was being held in the yard behind the auction rooms. The only patch of shade, cast by a big pepper tree, was jammed with people. A group of stout old women had established themselves there in armchairs and on a sofa, where they sat stolidly fanning. There were orange trees by the empty broken-down fowl run and against the tank, but their shade was an illusion. The beds and dressing tables had been placed where it should have fallen, but they were so hot in the blaze of the sun that the varnish had almost a quiver of heat haze over it. Chairs baked until the leather seats were too hot to touch; and the wardrobes, palm-stands, pot-racks, all the poor litter of wood cheaply nailed together, looked as though they would crack and snap apart at any moment.

Dogs circled about yelping when they were trodden on; bicycles leant against the entry-gate; a row of shining cars was drawn up along the footpath outside the auction rooms; a horse tethered to the fence beat its front hoof impatiently. The babies in their perambulators, the small children wandering about grizzling, the auctioneer with a knotted handkerchief over his head—all felt the heat.

Along a row of tables laden with the dead woman's china and glass, with pepper castors and teapots and sugar-bowls, spoons, forks and kitchenware, the women bobbed their black umbrellas, pushing, murmuring, nudging each other with shopping baskets and hand bags. They stood chatting in groups, linen dresses, floral dresses and stripes making a pattern of pink and green, of mauve and grey and yellow. Mostly they wore white hats and shoes because it was such hot weather. Older women, wrinkled and shapeless, in black that shone white with the heat, crawled about like cockroaches upset by the disturbance. The few men lounging about were creatures of a different species from the coloured throng of women. "I never seen such a big crowd at an auction since I been living here", one old lady with whiskers like a tom-cat



remarked to another stout old lady who was sitting on a box to rest her swollen feet.

"Well I don't suppose now it would make any difference to a wardrobe . . . what happened to her."

The noise and the heat, the shifts and changes of the crowd, beat down the shouting of the auctioneer. "Ten, ten-a-half! Over there Joe. Gone at ten-a-half. Mrs. Armstrong. No, not you, Mrs. Clancy. Pass them over there. Now next lot. Two . . ."

The noise rose up round him, making an undercurrent to his rapid babble, as the pebbles in a stream have each a separate ripple under the roar. They were selling off the woman's iron roasting dishes.

"I remember the time mother cooked a sucking pig in the big one", her daughter Julie said. "You remember, Maisie, when mother cooked that sucking pig and two roast fowls?" They stood together in the shade of the auction-room doorway.

"I can't see for them black umbrellas bobbing up and down", Maisie said fretfully. "You look a sight, Jule. You got a big smear of dirt by your nose."

"Well I had to unpack all them things, didn't I? Doing all the dirty work. I hadn't time to clean up."

"Oh look at that chap with the horse! It nearly stepped on that little child. They got no right to bring horses in a crowd."

"Did you see all the cars outside?"

"It was a good thing she lived next-door and we could just lift all the furniture over the fence."

They were stout women with glasses, with pearl necklaces, with big bosoms and tight corsets and grey bobbed hair. Their aprons and bare arms cut them off from the crowd.

The auctioneer was holding up a handful of knives. "Come on." He cast a glance round the crowd. "Why don't you bid? They haven't ever been used."

There was a deadly silence and then smothered laughter that was half-shocked.

"It was with the bread-knife he did it", someone murmured.

The bidding began again rapidly. "Three. Three-a-half. Four. Four. . . . Gorn to Mrs. Sorby. Pass 'em across, Joe, over there. . . ."

The sisters exchanged glances. "He hadn't ought to have said that", Julie said. She looked with a vague hostility at the milling black umbrellas, the green and flowery frocks, the white hats and shoes in the shade of the pepper tree.

"They all come to get things cheap because they knew she kept the linen and towels from the time we had the hotel in Stanton."

They could think of their mother as she had been, stout and jolly and coarse. It wouldn't do to think of what had happened to her since she bought the business in Stanley Street. Just a small shop with a residential attached. They had talked it over a hundred times, but they still couldn't realize that their mother had been murdered. It had been in all the papers, "Woman found Murdered in Residential". Just another sordid crime, a drunken man who had been on good terms with mother. It didn't do to think of it. Now there was nothing of her except the chairs cracking with the heat; the rugs tossed down in a heap in the dust; the wardrobes and dressing tables and beds. There would be no bids for one of those beds. You could see by the way the people huddled away from those iron bedsteads that they knew. They joked and laughed more than was usual at sales. It was as though in the strong sunlight they had to keep their courage up.

The old men and women gossiped as they sat in the shade on the dead woman's chairs and sofas; old wrinkled men leaning on their sticks; stout matrons who had come from curiosity just to stare; they sat and fanned themselves and did not think. Sometimes one woman would say to another in the crowd with a half-joking, half-nervous laugh, "Why, Millie, what are you doing here?"

"I come to see if I could get some glasses, May. You know Alf's always bringing home fellows and I'm real ashamed of those old chipped cups." But there was an edge of defence on her voice.



Only the auctioneer's eyes moved in his face, a yellow face cracked and seamed. His mouth was just another crack bellowing. His eyes were screwed up against the glare. "Nine, nine-a-half." The two women stood immobile in the doorway.

"It's the dinner service I'm worried about. If they put it up in separate lots, it'll never fetch what it's worth. They don't know what she paid for it. It's real good china."

They had been two little girls when mother bought that dinner service. It had cost twenty pounds. A dozen of everything. Nothing had ever been broken. It had been treasured, scarcely ever brought out.

"Run down and tell George to put it up in one lot. Don't let them have it"—Maisie's voice was fierce—"just in half-dozens."

Her sister nodded and waddled off very fast to look for her husband somewhere down in the throng. "I'd sooner we kept it for the children", Maisie confided to one of the stout old women who sat on a box. "We could divide it among us." There was a greed in her eyes. "It's too good to sell, but Julie *would* have it put up. That's just like her."

The auctioneer had bent down and was talking earnestly to the dead woman's eldest daughter. "All right, all right", he said rapidly. "Just as you like."

Presently the stout woman came back panting, her arms full of plates, her husband following behind with the rest of the dinner service. "I wasn't going to let them have it", she said grimly, "not for that price."

The old woman who had been sitting on a box, began finging the linen which overflowed from another box beside her. "A pity it's stained", she grunted. "It'll go cheap."

"It's only water-stain", the daughter said quickly. "It 'ull bleach out." The terrible, terrible stain, it had run through the sheets, it was all over the floor. In the strong sunlight, with the stout women crowding to finger the things mother had touched, it did not do to remember. "It's only water-stain", she said again anxiously.

The auctioneer, standing on his box, was holding high above the black umbrellas and white hats a china ornament. At first they thought it was a jug, a shiny black china jug.

Then, as he turned it around, it was a cat, hideous, elongated grotesque. He waved the black china cat carelessly above his head.

"Here you are." His carved face jutted expressionless over the moving and shuffling, fidgeting mob. "Here you are. A black cat! A black cat for luck! Who wants a black cat? A lucky black cat?"

There was silence and then suddenly the crowd burst into a roar of laughter. They laughed and laughed, under the green shade of the pepper tree, in the baking sunlight. The stir and rush of their laughter went through the thin orange tree boughs where the green oranges hung tarnished with scale. The horse tied to the fence turned its head and twitched its ears, then dropped its head again. They were laughing out in the strong sunlight, roaring the defiance of life against the terrible shadow that was there among the kitchen pots, the linen, and the smell of sweat, laughing high and nervously to banish the thought that the murdered woman had touched that cat, that she had thought black cats lucky.

"Two, two-a-half, three", the auctioneer chanted. He waved the cat with a triumphant leer at his own success. "Four, five, seven, eight, -a-half. Here you are, Mrs. Garetty."

The elder sister had returned from bestowing the treasured dinner service.

"How they going?" she asked.

The other nodded, satisfied. "Seem to be getting good prices."

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### FLAKES.

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They seemed as angels made unstained,  
The first that fell on me.  
They came until my garth contained  
A white autocracy.

Implacable the voiceless strife!  
This fierce soft-footed crowd  
Turned the familiars of my life  
To shapes beneath a shroud.

"E."

## THERE LIES THE EAST.

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 By S.G.
 

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There lies the East, where my beloved lies;  
 The sun that wakens me first kisses her.

*And that, in spite of my devotion, is as far as I can get at the moment,* thought—almost said—the writer. It was to have been a long poem, uttering all the thoughts that had grown in him to the point of lyrical and imaginative expression, through the course of his love for Lelia. But the two lines had come singly, at different times; and it was only afterwards that he had the notion of putting them together; and some time more before he fancied he could go on and make a poem. Then it was to be a rhapsody, flowing and endless, for there was no exhausting her perfections; and she was to have it spoken or sung to her at their meetings. Yet he could add nothing to the lines; and, in any case, the more he looked at them, the more they seemed already perfect and complete. The poem, in fact, was done.

Then he thought: *Why not prose? Why wait for verse? It will be just as beautiful. It will grow rhythmical, and perhaps in the end be a poem itself—possibly a better poem than one written in metre would be. Prose! Yes. Prose comes easily enough to me. But where to start? How to begin extolling her? Which part of my love and devotion shall I utter first? Don't worry over it. Just let it come. Let it come. . . .*

I walk upon the clouds, I share ethereal day. Lelia has given me her love, her mind, her life. I have been admitted to treasures I knew nothing of before——

*But I am writing flat prose, letting it fall without shaping. Try again, try again. . . .*

When I see the love of my life softly walking along the street I cannot think her real. She is quite unlike anyone who passes her, is behind her, or before her, or whom she passes. They are men and women, and earth-bound; but she has the look of a sprite, and at any moment as I watch I expect to see her disappear—not suddenly, but



as though the vision just failed to embrace her any more, and only the common objects were left. She is unearthly partly because her own eyes are not turned on the earth or anything in it. She passes in a rapt mood, and no one could guess what her soul is intent on, where she has come from, or where she is going. Only one, now and then, apart from the sexualists, ever notices her, and that rare person is struck, astounded, as though he had had a revelation. He does not know how to put it to himself. He might say, within him: Lovely eyes; true colleen; child or woman? Or, What is the matter with me? But he perceives nothing of the truth. He only knows that he has seen in the flow of people something strange, undreamed of. He stares after her, forgets what he had intended to do, and walks on musing.

But I know you, Lelia, my darling! I who have possessed your days and nights! I know the beauty that is in you, the love that flows out and envelops a man in its sweet mist until he cannot see the world, the women in it—even the sky! I know the sweetness of temper, the kindness of heart, the nobility of mind, that are yours alone. Never was man so blessed as in your love! Never was poet so inspired as I in those lyrics which, written to you, have already won me fame!

*And now I am in the vein! Now I can write! I will write and write! Nothing shall stop me! I will write on and on and on—the purest praise of a woman ever made in prose—and already, too, a poem is coming:*

Allegra is my lover, and the sun may glow,  
But with nothing like the fervour that my heart can show—

*A knock! Good God, who's that? Why can't they leave me alone? I'm writing! Don't they know a writer mustn't be disturbed? His work's hard enough without interruptions! "Oh come in. Come in!" (blast you, whoever you are!) . . . "Lelia! I didn't expect you till to-night. How are you, dearest?"*

"I'm quite well, Jackie, thank you. I came to see if you could lend me a book for Martha. She's very fretful, and if you have something suitable, it will— But you're writing! I'm sorry, dear. I know you don't like being disturbed—"

"Oh no, it's quite all right, love. Come here. Sit down. Have a cigarette." *Oh why did she have to come in just then? How can I ever write what I feel about her if she's always barging in on my writing hours? No, that's not true. She never comes when I'm writing.*

"Thank you, Jackie. I won't stay, as you're busy. Just get me a book darling—something light—but not too light. You know what Martha fancies."

*Yes, a book. I'll get her a book. And I'll be half the morning hunting for it too. Something light . . .! What should I be doing with "something light, but not too light"? Blast Martha! And you, Lelia, haven't you more sense? I'm not in the mood for love. I want to write! Why couldn't you have left it till to-night? A book. This one. No! Oh hang it, the thing's going right out of my mind. I can't find one.*

"Oh don't worry, dear, if there isn't one handy. But I thought it would soothe her . . ."

"It's all right. I'll find one."

"You're not annoyed, are you, Jackie?" Getting up: "I can easily go. I'm sorry."

"No, no; of course not. Sit down. I'll soon find one." . . . Wodehouse . . . Martin Armstrong . . . Mary Mitchell . . . "The Last Look"—well, it's mine, but why not? Stories . . . what a genius I had when I wrote those! 'Pyjama Party', 'Lapland Lovers'—she'll like that. But oh, Lelia, why did you come in just when I was writing a poem about you! How can I write it now? Don't women know that you can't write about them when they're there? You have to be away from them to think about them. When they're with you they're tempting you all the time—without knowing it, of course! But it's the interruption to work that's the worst of all. I can't go back to it after this.

"Let me help, Jackie. Or you go on with your work while I look. What are you writing? Poem? Story? No, not that: Martha's read *The Last Look*—and she didn't think much of it! What about this? Yes . . . looks as though it might do. . . ."

*Take it and get out of this! Martha! Hang Martha! I could have written a perfect poem—better than anything I've ever done before. Oh, what's the use?*

"Will you have some tea, Lelia? I can soon get it."

"No thanks, dear. I'll go now. Goodbye—till to-night."

*A kiss—a parting kiss. And now I'm expected to go back to my desk and go on writing. Well I won't! I've had enough*

*of it! I won't write anything more! Love and work are two different things, and women will have to learn not to mix them. I'm glad I'm not married to her. She'd always be breaking in on me for something or other. A book for Martha! Martha!*

*Well, I may as well do something. I'll try again. Not the poem—that's gone: what could you expect? Ah! Yes! I'll work off this bitterness in a slash at women; then perhaps I can go back to the prose-piece.*

Women: animals of all shapes and sizes created for one purpose and doing their best to evade it. Once they are mature there is only one place for them, and they should never be seen out of it. Up to that time they may strut in the street, offend the hearing with their chatter and the smell with their nauseous mixture of the natural and the exotic. Men on the other hand, with their lithe unprotuberant bodies, are formed to go everywhere, all their lives. They are the world-makers and world-shakers. They act, being shaped for action. And they don't waste time standing about, shrieking and giggling at each other, or exchanging deadly glances and poisonous words. Oh the silly vanity of the creatures!—

*But Lelia is not like that! She never makes up to attract (she doesn't need to, the lovely thing! they all run after her). She never wastes her time in idle chit-chat. When she talks she always says something sensible. . . . Was I rude to her? (I'm sorry, darling. I didn't mean it. I'll be better next time.) Lovely, lovely Lelia, so dear and near to me! . . .*

*There lies the East where my beloved lies;  
The sun that wakens me first kisses her! . . .  
Thus are her tender lips borne to my eyes,  
And love and light at once their gifts confer!*

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### ABORIGINAL.

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In the moon of the waterfowl,  
When the reeds are full of talk  
And the fish springs for the gnat,  
I will make walk-about, for the moon  
Of growing grass is here,  
And the life wakes in the blood.



By the women's mi-mi  
I will swing the calling *narmi*  
In the dusk—the woman-drawer  
That will speak for me—  
And in the moon of blossom  
You will come.

*Note.*—As all early peoples did (and as we still keep in reminder in expressions like honey-moon and harvest-moon), the aboriginals of Australia, in their primitive condition, marked the year by natural phenomena and held festival at the full moon. So there was the period or moon of the nesting of the waterfowl, the moon of the growing grass, or (as I have heard my father say) the moon of the red quandong, or of the blossoming of the currajong. Morangorell, an early station on the Bland belonging to father's people, meant "The nesting place of the waterfowl", and the coming of the blacks to the station was as regular as the birds—and the moon. The moon being male, the feasting of the period of promiscuity for the *ngcobberas*, or initiates of a certain age, began at the full moon and lasted for three nights. Father always forbade any white men to go near the tribes at this period. I refer to a time when the blacks along the Darling and down to the Murray (these being the only ones I knew) were still allowed in many places to remain tribal, and were permitted to keep and practise their own native ritual.

Men going alone out back, or on strange country not yet settled, preferred the *ngcobbera* as a guide, as he was young, more easily frightened of a gun, and, as I have heard the men say, not having the harrowing memories of outrage that the elder men had, was less likely to attack. On all the stations I recollect *ngcobbera* was shortened to *cobber* by the white stockmen.

The *narmi* was the tiny or miniature *churinga* (if it really were a *churinga* in the stricter sense) and was a means of courtship. The boy would stand unseen and swing it. It had a sharp sound, that almost was a whistle. I remember my mother asking how, if the boy had to keep out of sight of the women, the girl he wanted would or could know she was the one meant, and father replied that there were always ways, and that the elder women, if they were satisfied with the boy, would give the girl the sign, or pretend they were too busy to notice what was going on. At the Sydney Museum I was astounded to find that the woman-drawer (as the word translated) was in every case marked "toy *churinga*". And when I asked why, I was told that it was "*because it was small*"!

MARY GILMORE.

## 7 GAUNT STREET.

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By KEN LEVIS.

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SHE was seated the other side of the green tablecloth when I entered. No smile answered my greeting. It was one of her sullen moods—she had just been writing to her husband overseas, and that, I was to find out, always left her sudden. Scarcely a welcome for a new boarder, you would say. At once her portrait swivelled into place in the picture of the house my mind was busy compiling in those first significant minutes. Ah, I ticked off, the landlady's spoilt daughter. A trouble-maker. I was not wrong.

That first meeting stands sharp in my memory now—the cool musty smell of the dim breakfast room. Its heavy green curtains velveteed the light. A room of moveless air. Somewhat wearily I wondered how many thousands of these littered Sydney—stale cubes of depression. I sat on the plush chair near the fire screen. I chose it because its mate showed sharp edges of unruly springs. I could see her easily there, too. She broke an awkward silence. "It's a lovely day outside", she said. I said it was.

Her mother entered, a clockwork little lady, methodically busy. "Not a moment now", she said, "I'll give you tea and scones. Will you have some, Stella?" She said it wistfully almost, a ghost-smile flickering over her face, as if ready to slide away or beam as the answer might indicate. It slid away. Stella bluntly wanted none. The mother gave me a sidelong smile and slipped back to the kitchen. I watched her disappear, rather than look at Stella. Stella looked at me. I caught her glance. "Mother's too damn fussy", she said ungraciously. There was nothing to reply but a coldly sympathetic smirk.

The scones came in with the tea. She slopped it over as she handed it me, so that one of the scones was sopped. "How careless of me", she exclaimed without expression. "Let me empty your saucer." She insisted, so I let her. The scones were dusted with flour and furred my mouth. I gulped my

tea noisily in the silence. Stella got up to go inside. Then I perceived she was big with child.

I shall always think kindly of Mrs. Chambers. She was kind to me as her methodical life allowed. I was young then, and busy with night-work, so she kept my dinner heated. It was always shrivelled a little from the stove heat and rather tasteless, but she really tried to be kind. "You must be tired!" she would say, smiling faintly, as I came in. "And I suppose you've had nothing since lunch." Then she would bustle with the tea-making and tell me she had not been able to finish last week's puzzle in the *Woman's Supplement*, or that she had been to visit her sister who had a poultry run. And when I went to stay with my friends at week-ends, she would give me a little bottle of jam "from our own tree in the back yard". But she seemed a little distrustful of her kindness. Perhaps dimly she knew it had been her tribulation. She would shut that from her mind, though. There was nothing to be done about that now. Stella was ever irritable and would burst out petulantly, without warning. She was abominable. Her mother would half-smile and sidle out of the room, leaving me uncomfortable with the young woman.

She spoke no kindly word of anyone while I was there, so that she began to get my nerves on edge. At table she cut across the conversation—such as it was—as with a cold knife. Hopefully her mother would try at innocent talk. Then I would find myself waiting for the inevitable snap, inwardly fuming when it came, staring at my plate to avoid that half-formed smile sliding from the old lady's face. I knew it would be there, without looking. It was pathetic from long habit.

One day she told me, "Stella is going to have a baby!" She almost whispered it in her grave confidence. "It makes her rather trying at times", she said.

I had not expected any knowledge of this from her, and I was pleased, for it showed her trust in me. To tell me—almost a stranger—must have been a tremendous thing; but I rather fancied she did it to excuse her daughter's ill-nature.

Perhaps I was wrong to think so, being blindly biased at the time. I had seen them knitting in the old chairs on the back lawn, seemingly close-drawn, even laughing together;



but at night the girl would be waspish as ever. Perhaps it was the child that drew them together in odd moments. And I think the old lady went about hoping the infant would in some way erase the bitterness of the past and bring them close to each other. She could give it so much of the love that was now slapped back in her face.

As for Stella, she persisted in an ostrich belief of my male ignorance—to the point of absurdity. She would go to ridiculous limits to conceal her condition from me, so that it became all the more obvious. That was annoying, too. I found myself pitying the coming child already. What an atmosphere the poor little devil would come into. How impossible would be his child-struggle. I wondered would he ever outgrow a stunted childhood, or could it give him ‘backbone’?

As the weeks passed she became more preoccupied with her sewing. Unlovely needlework it appeared. I remember seeing some little shirts half-finished from a piece of pinkish flannelette. I shrank from the little one’s fate.

The old lady was now more methodically busy than ever, enslaved to her daughter till she was quite wearied. She would see I had my dinner and leave the ‘washing up’ till morning, creeping off to bed early. She began to seem a pathetic old thing, and I wished I could do something to help her.

Then one night I found my dinner half-cold in the old stove, and no Mrs. Chambers to greet me wearily as of late. Ah, I thought, at last! It seemed a great relief. I was glad for the grandmother. Henceforth her life would have more of comfort.

It was late that night when I heard her fumbling with her latchkey. She was excited and quite worn out.

“How is Stella?” I asked.

“Well”, she replied, wearily smiling. “A boy”, she added; “seven pounds.” I enthused as much as I could. “It isn’t too well yet”, she said.

Her mind wasn’t at rest, for I could hear her moving about in her room for a time. Her bed tossed too, so she

couldn't have had much sleep. I was sorry for her and found my reading impossible. Seeking to shut off her world I snapped off the light.

In the morning a light knock on my door roused me. "The hospital", she faltered, "they have rung me." I drew my clothes on and drove her down. She sat beside me, silent. There seemed to be nothing I could say to the poor old woman. Her loneliness was a terrible thing.

The doctor waited for us in a bare white room. His manner told all. I watched his mouth frame the words.

"Both?" I asked.

"Yes", he said.

Suddenly she broke down. She turned and caught my arm. She clung to me fiercely, without knowing.

Once before I had felt that same chilling fear-grip. A native bear had clung to my arm a-quiver with terror. It clung there terrified from the hounds.

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### TO A FRIEND.

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Not in the sharp immediate pursuit,  
Swerve of treeshape, cry of a bird,  
The instant flash of a swung axe, and all  
The hard bright seen and touched and heard—

Fingers following these give not enough  
To form in cupped hands the minutest crystal,  
Gazed after, unattained, O cried for: strength  
Flowing like the sea, impregnable.

It will not lie here, in the dancing of leaves,  
Doctrine that you seek, shape and limit, to edge  
The wanton will and mind's error—not here,  
Not in the high hill and cloud, crowding of sedge.

Here is but breathing of the wild wind,  
Stirring of blind life, surge to the sun  
And away to winter, and sleep and silent frost;  
Then wrinkled earth golden again with new corn.

S.M.

## BROUGHT TO BOOK.

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### CULTURE CORROBOREE.

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*Cultural Cross-Section*. Edited by John Ingamells. (A Jindyworobak Publication, Adelaide, 1941. 3s. 6d.) *Flaunted Banners*, by Victor Kennedy. (A Jindyworobak Publication, Adelaide, 1941.) *At a Boundary*, by John Ingamells and Rex Ingamells. (F. W. Preece Ltd., Adelaide, 1941.) *This is Australia*, by Ian Mudie. (Frank E. Cork, Adelaide, 1941. 3s. 6d.)

THE Jindyworobaks might be described as the Boy Scout School of Poetry. They have the same boyish enthusiasm for playing at being primitive, they lay the same stress on the moral values of bushcraft and the open air, they promise to be pure Australian in word and thought and deed, but above all there is the common determination to do noble deeds, not to dream them all day long. *Flaunted Banners* and *Cultural Cross-Section* contain the latest explanations and defence of the Jindyworobak theories. *Flaunted Banners* by Victor Kennedy is a reasoned attempt to explain just what the movement stands for and to clear up some common mistakes about it. It does not, he points out, require us to become aboriginal, live in a gunyah or eat goannas. It is simply "an effort to link Australian thought with its own natural background". We are asked to treat "as alien everything that owes its being directly to other cultures—English cultures. Irish cultures, German, Dutch or American", and to study and make the basis of our own traditions and vision "the only true and sincere Australian culture . . . that of the aboriginal race". We are told we must adapt ourselves to this country since the country will not adapt itself to us.

I think this is where the Jindyworobaks make their first mistake. They still see Australia as the country untouched by the white man. They call this the real Australia and they see the Australia we have made as an artificial and factitious thing. They do not see that a windmill, a railway train, a sheep station, a vineyard, Broken Hill and Canberra are as much part of our natural background today as, to quote Rex Ingamells, "the haggard outback valleys, silent deserts and scraggly scrublands". The point of view is put in the series of emotional outbursts masquerading as an argument which appears in *Cultural Cross-Section* under the title of "Politics and Aboriginal Culture", by Ian Mudie. "We are merely aliens in our own land, and nothing else. In 153 years we have failed to become adjusted to our environment."

The answer is that wherever we have settled in those 153 years, we have adjusted the environment to ourselves just as we have adjusted ourselves to the environment. To say we have not is nonsense. We



have created a new European country in Australia and we belong to the European nations even though we do not live in Europe. Mr. Mudie selects what he likes in the country, calls that Australia and says we should write about it. Anything he does not like he calls alien. Mr. Kennedy points out that our poets too often write as if they were still living in England and so write badly, for what they write is second-hand and imitative. But to the majority of Australians, the point of view and culture of the aboriginal is still more alien and remote, and the poet who tries to write like a second-hand abo. is no more likely to produce sincere work than the poet who writes like a second-hand Englishman. In fact, the result of attempting to write like an aboriginal is shown in one of the examples Mr. Kennedy selects to praise:

Garrakeen, the parakeet, is slim and swift.  
Like a spear of green and red he flashes through  
The cumbered branches of the river bank.

Of this Mr. Kennedy writes: "The observation is correct in the first place but the significance lies in the simile of the second line which is derived not from the decayed romanticism of a familiar literature but from the very world around".

This illustrates the kind of delusion of the Jindyworobak mind which sees the corroboree as a literary rite. Mr. Kennedy and the poet he quotes, Mr. Rex Ingamells, may, for all I know, write with their spears and throwing sticks beside them, but I should like to know for how many other Australians a spear is a natural simile for a parakeet, or taken from "the very world around".

*Cultural Cross-Section*, as its name suggests, appears to mark stage two in the Jindyworobak cultural revolution. From a mystical nationalism in poetry it has gone on to Jindyworobak economics and a social theory which quotes Kipling, the great Boy Scout, as its text:

Nations have passed away and left no traces,  
And History gives the naked cause of it  
One single simple reason in all cases:  
They fell because their people were not fit.

There are critical and historical articles by John Ingamells on the general state of literary culture in Australia, by Rex Ingamells on National Unity in which the Jindyworobak political creed begins to take shape. There is a survey of poetry by Nettie Palmer. There is the incoherent article on Politics and Aboriginal Culture already mentioned and articles on Painting, Sculpture and Music. In spite of some fine theosophical nonsense by A. N. Ingamells, it appears that the Jindyworobaks have not yet been able to nationalise music. It does appear, however, that the Jindyworobak composer is going to get there in the end by the simple process of dieting:

"The greatest artists of the future must shun all excesses in food, drink and living that would impair their healthy receptivity. Man must vibrate to the inspirational forces emanating from the peaks of consciousness. Thus he will be able to sense, select and combine sounds, colours, forms and movements in a far finer way than any purely technical and intellectual knowledge, however great, would enable him to do."

This article represents perhaps the main fault of Jindyworobak prose and Jindyworobak argument. Most of these articles achieve the rich incoherence of the type of mind that thinks almost entirely in abstract nouns. This is a pity because there is a core of sound common sense in the Jindyworobak case.

However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and besides reprints of articles by J. K. Ewers, James Devaney and others, there are a number of new poems scattered through the book. The best of them, "In the Workshop" by Leonard Mann, has already appeared in *Poems from the Mask*. Flexmore Hudson's "Wanderlust" is immediately convincing and satisfying and "Address to Life" is nearly as good. The sonnet form may have something to do with the fact that there is none of the loose thin quality of much of his previously published verse.

I like too Gina Ballantyne's "Phantom: Song of the Lost Tribes", and "Nightfall: Sydney Harbour" is an adequate new expression of a rather worn-out subject. Sheila Sibley's "Song for a Man" is a silly poem, but we have all, I suppose, written this sort of thing at the humorless age when one can't hear the words for the feelings.

As a cross-section of Australian Culture the book is unconvincing and confused. As a cross-section of the Jindyworobak mind it is well worth intelligent and critical study—especially by Jindyworobaks.

*At a Boundary* by John and Rex Ingamells does not explain its name, but has in it several poems that I like, especially the psychological delicacy of "Written on Leave" by John Ingamells.

The chief poem in the book is a long piece of versified journalese: "The Gangrened People" by Rex Ingamells. In this, I am afraid, indignation replaces poetry altogether. Here is a sample of flat-foot verbiage which makes one wonder whether the Jindyworobaks are really competent to speak for poetry in Australia:

We who are called Australians have no country;  
No country holds us native heart and soul: . . .  
We dwell in the limbo of a harsh deception,  
A criminal betrayal, guaranteeing  
The selfish satisfaction of the cunning  
Exploiting us for money, money, money,  
Spreading the itch to purchase every day,  
Filling our hearts with fatal loyalties  
To nations not our own, nor suited to us.

There are five whole pages of this. Believe it or not! If troop-leader Rex can mistake it for poetry it is high time the Jindyworobaks deposed him and took away his bushcraft badge.

I suggest that it might be given for merit to Ian Mudie, whose new volume, *This is Australia*, is not only finer and rarer work than *Corroboree to the Sun*, but is the poetry of a man in love. All the poems in this book are the same poem, they all state the Jindyworobak thesis, they are all unashamed patriotic poems and, unpromising as it sounds, they are all convincing and sincere because they are all love-poems. It is a fanatic love: the love of

sons who shall hold  
That soil sacred, sons who shall be  
Fanatic and consecrated in their loyalty.

It has traces of the fanaticism of the Hitler Youth Movement. In fact, like most love-poetry it contains a lot of patent absurdity—and yet, because it is poetry, can give the truth of the vision and allow us to share the sincerity of the experience.

My people have few songs to sing;  
thus should it be; a people's songs  
rise from its nationhood, and we  
are not a nation, shall not be  
until our land in all our thoughts  
looms vast and peremptory as the sea.

expresses much the same thing as the lines by Rex Ingamells. The difference is that one uses the method of poetry, the other the rhetoric of fifth-rate journalism.

A. D. HOPE.

## POETRY WITHOUT -ISM.

*Royal*, by Mary Finnin. (W. A. Hamer, Melbourne, 1941.)

*Meanjin Papers*: Contemporary Queensland Prose and Verse. No. 4, June; No. 5, August, 1941. Edited and Published by C. B. Christesen. (Brisbane. 2s. each.)

THE art of Mary Finnin has grown in an odd way. Technically the verse of her latest volume is no better and no worse than that of "A Beggar's Opera" published in 1938. The language is as limited, as romantic and as bookishly poetical as in the earlier volumes. She is still capable of thinking small-beer epigrams worth printing and of a certain lady-like lushness and vagueness in dealing with sexual passion that can be peculiarly revolting as in the line: "Untasted beauties garnish passion's art." Poems like "Love and Death", "All Souls", "Salut à Provence" are a kind of undergraduate exercise of which the first volumes were free, as are also bad translations such as that of Charles D'Orléans' rondeau: "Le temps a laissé son manteau."



Even the thing that distinguishes her poetry best, its sudden smiting of a fresh image out of conventional materials, remains much as it was. Compare

With jagged tooth, with clenched and frozen claw,  
The mountains lean upon the sky;  
Even so I,  
Lord, on Thy mercy's robe depend,  
Lifting sharp supplication to the end,  
Still chastened by Thy law.

from "Clear Sky" with:

No stir hereunder,  
only a sombre sense  
of large and quiet and a graze of stars  
Come down to drink at peace, to cool their manes  
Before the night course and the dawn stampede.

from "Sea Level" in her first volume.

No! What distinguishes *Royal* I think is mental growth. There is a maturity of perception that shows itself in the greater number of poems dealing with Australia, or rather, poems in which the academic landscape of literary nowhere begins to give place to an awareness of the world in which she lives. But far more important is the number of poems in which the recording and enriching of impressions is less important than the interpretation and comment on experience. Mary Finnin is beginning to digest her experience. Although she has a few poems in this volume which could give points to the Jindyworobaks, because she never forgets, as they so often do, that an enthusiasm for local fauna and flora does not itself make a poem, still in the main her poetry is European, derivative, quite Victorian in its approach and technique. It only goes to show that it is the man (or woman) and not the method that counts in poetry: the attainment of a personal integrity of vision and a skill to convey it. It is this integrity of personal vision that begins to emerge in *Royal*. "Full Tide" and "Approach" are more than surfaces of poetry: they have one deep of meaning lying below another, they have that power to present experience and the analysis of experience at once which is the peculiar power of poetry. It is true that there are depths below those that Miss Finnin can reach. She is not a pioneer of the spirit like Brennan. The new volume is distinguished by a thinking eye. It is the intellectual quality that makes it. But there is none of the exact and terrible clairvoyance which distinguishes the poets who lead from the poets who merely accompany their generation. In the one poem that approaches it I have the feeling that the poet herself was unaware of the ferocious irony with which she reveals the female animal through the veil of sentimental attitude. But, both for its symbolism and its naked brutality, "The Pledge of Love" would be worth quoting. Here at last is woman's perfect answer to the I-could-not-love-thee-dear-so-much-loved-I-not-honour-more school of thought. But was it really meant to be so? I wonder.

The Fourth and Fifth numbers of *Meanjin Papers* keep up the standard of previous numbers. There are several delightful things in the Winter number. The best are James Picot's delicate inverted sonnet: "To the Rosella in the Poinsettia Tree", and Brian Vrepont's "The First Bomb". The verse by Peter Miles and Neil Smith is uncertain, fumbling stuff and there seems no reason why M. Hamlyn-Harris's "There is no Death in Life" and Tom Dimes's "Low Tide" should have been printed at all: they represent the worst kind of sham poetry. The August number has fewer poems, but nearly all of them are interesting and alive. This must be about the best number so far produced. Unfortunately the *Meanjins*, like the *Jindyworobaks*, cannot resist the kind of lovely theorizing about Life and Art and Culture and other capital letter abstractions which make the most absorbing and thrilling topics for discussion round the fire or over the café table, but somehow look rather pathetic and adolescent in cold print. More than half of this issue is filled with rather tedious discussion, though the earnest and unconscious snobbery of the Letter to Tom Collins is amusing. Apparently *Meanjin* verse is difficult enough to need an interpreter. I should not have thought so.

Of course the best thing about *Meanjin Papers* is that they help poets in the best way poetry can be helped—not by theories, schools and programmes, but by simply giving poets a chance to publish their work. As a poet Mr. Christesen leaves me cold, but as an editor he is the apple of my eye. His selection is not narrowed by quack theories, nearly all he publishes is worth reading, and yet he gives a chance to the young poet who is still uncertainly finding his way as well as to those who already know what they want to say and how to say it.

A. D. HOPE.

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## OUR ISLAND STORY.

*Coast to Coast*, Australian Short Stories, 1941. (Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1941. 7s. 6d.)

AUSTRALIAN literature forges ahead. Here we are at the "best short stories of the year" stage—or so the publishers bravely, and not unreasonably, hope. This is the first of a "projected series of yearly volumes" in the manner of Edward O'Brien—whose function Cecil Mann admirably fulfils. The wrapper gives the number of authors represented as eighteen; my count is nineteen. Barnard Eldershaw seems—or seem—responsible for the discrepancy; after all, they are separate entities here.

Here are stories, say the publishers, "that stand their ground with the best contemporary stories being written anywhere in the world". Well—some undoubtedly do. But it is clear that Cecil Mann's problem is not yet (as who would expect it to be?) what O'Brien's must have been so constantly—what to leave out. The standard

varies within rather wide limits; and not only the standard. It seems odd to have Hugh McCrae's uproarious joke "Adventure" and Gavin Casey's "Short Shift Saturday" within the same set of covers; each is a "best short story" without a doubt, and yet can the same term really fit both?

Casey's story I regard as the best thing in the book. It is true that he has the advantage of room—the story is forty-five pages long, and perhaps rather a novel in little. But definitions are idle here. Casey avails himself of exactly as much space as he requires to tell what he has to tell—no more, no less. It is a study of a Saturday on the goldfields—one worker's Saturday: the short shift in the morning, the afternoon with its promise of good times that never come, the drinking, the ennui, the disillusionment, the listlessness. The style is quietly objective, perfectly suitable, recreating for us the whole inner life of the man, past and present. At the end of the day "I lay there and wanted to tell her all about everything. But it was too big a job. It'd take the night, or half of it. The words were not in me. It was so long since I'd talked to her about what I thought that I couldn't start now. . . . I'd grown new ways of thinking, and so had she." Do people still muse on "the great Australian novel" for which we wait? Casey, I believe, has it in him to write it.

There is plenty of good craftsmanship in this volume. Vance Palmer's presentation in "Josie" of a child's mixed-up feeling about the death of a schoolmate, Dalby Davison's subtle "Return of the Hunter" with its interesting time-shifts, Stewart Howard's gripping "Heat", Marjorie Barnard's nightmare fantasy "Dry Spell", A. C. Headley's "Values" (a grotesque picture of a domestic economy that revolves round racing "dorgs")—the work in these is by experts who know their jobs. Influences are not particularly visible. In Douglas Stewart's "The Bishops Shoot a Godwit" one catches perhaps a whiff of H. E. Bates, but the resemblance may be quite illusory. Stewart writes in his own way; of Mr. Bishop who smoked a huge cherry-wood pipe: "When he filled it, he seemed to be packing a cabin-trunk for a long voyage." The only exception is Dal Stivens, who is conscientiously Hemingwayesque. He has all the mannerisms: "His name was Romer Weston. He was an actor. . . . The man named Romer Weston . . . Romer Weston said . . . Romer said . . . Romer said . . . The actor called Romer Weston said . . . 'Too right', the waiter said." "Given the same emotion, the same broad formula comes naturally to the hands of any people in any century." So said Hulme, and everybody can see that it must be so. Here we are dealing with very narrow, very specific formulae, but perhaps Stivens requires them.

I add a carping criticism. Australian short story writers are at present weak in dialogue—their dialogue lacks bite, individuality, and the function of dialogue is not always understood. Dialogue has



no place in a story unless it is indispensable; it is not just a pleasant change, an "elegant variation" (as Fowler might have said), from narrative. Yet in some of these stories it is just that. Even Katharine Susannah Prichard makes one feel that she has portioned out her space—so many lines to narration, so many lines to conversation. As for the quality of the dialogue in "Marlene", it is difficult to feel that the genuine ring of the talk of the half-castes has been caught.

"'Lot of good it's ever done me', Albert sneered. 'If I'd been a myall I'd've had a better life. The blacks of any tribe share all they've got with each other. The whites grab all they can for themselves—and let even their own relations starve.'" Albert never said this; Miss Prichard, to score a point, pretends that he said it.

Again: "'And this is the only spot where we're allowed to camp in the district.'

"'Something will have to be done about it', Mrs. Boyd declared."

This is only narrative masquerading as dialogue. No scrap of conversation has a right to appear in a novel or a short story unless it illuminates (what does "Something will have to be done about it" illuminate?), unless it has in itself a piquant and arresting value. Miss Kylie Tennant is another sinner against this law.

A word on the appearance of this book. No matter what a book is like inside, it ought to be a simple matter to make the outside of it attractive. Sydney is teeming with talented commercial artists. Why then this dull dust-cover?

A. J. A. WALDOCK.

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## NEW ZEALAND ENGLISH.

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*New Zealand Slang*, by Sidney J. Baker. (Whitcombe and Tombs, Sydney, 1941. 2s. 9d.)

*New Zealand English: How it Should be Spoken*, by Arnold Wall. Second Edition. (Whitcombe and Tombs, 1941. 2s.)

THE spread of the English-speaking peoples throughout the world has brought into being a number of national variations of their language. There are those who see in this development no more than a disintegration of English, which is to be deplored and, if possible, resisted. But such divergent development is a sign rather of health and vitality, and as long as English remains a living language such developments must go on. The variations must be admitted, but their effect should not be exaggerated. Differences in pronunciation, for instance, are sometimes considerable, but there exist educated pronunciations of English in every English-speaking country which differ

very little from one another. Variation in vocabulary and colloquial idiom has progressed so far that an English reader of an Australian or a New Zealand novel would often come across an unfamiliar word or phrase. But the literary language differs very little between one country and another. Variation appears chiefly in that characteristic of language which is least stable, pronunciation, and in those elements of the vocabulary, slang and colloquialism, which respond most readily to new conditions and new ways of life. So we find forms of English which reflect varying forms of national life. But they are none the less English.

In America the separate development of the language has gone so far that we already have a dictionary of American usage, several books on American pronunciation and the beginning of a dictionary of American English on historical principles. But the development in Australia and New Zealand has gone far enough to make its study and description not only desirable but also necessary. Mr. Baker's book is the first separate treatment of New Zealand slang and colloquialism in which a measure of thoroughness is aimed at. This study is beset with many difficulties, both in the collection and in the examination of material. Mr. Baker's work is not very strictly philological. His purpose is not merely to record and describe in dictionary form the slang and colloquialism of New Zealand. He makes a very interesting attempt to interpret the words as reflecting some characteristics of New Zealand life and even history. A purpose such as this may tempt the investigator to accept words too readily as indigenous; and to accept somewhat uncritically the statements of writers of letters and diaries. Mr. Baker has searched the literature of New Zealand with great industry and has made a most interesting contribution to our knowledge of New Zealand English, undoubtedly the most comprehensive yet made. He has paid particular attention to the English adaptations of Maori words and Maori adaptations of English words. This subject is treated with a critical and well-informed judgment which makes it perhaps the most satisfying part of the book.

In the closing chapter of his book Mr. Baker has some remarks to offer on the New Zealand accent. For the most part he has the scientific attitude of the observer and has some salutary suggestions to make about the policy of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service in matters of speech. But it is often difficult to make out just what he means by some of his more general remarks. Some of his statements are inaccurate and many of his conclusions unacceptable. Professor Wall, who resists the temptation towards generalisation and theorising, is a better guide to pronunciation. The title of his book is *New Zealand English: How it Should be Spoken*. The subtitle is almost preposterous. But Professor Wall makes his position clear. His book is "not intended for those who wish



to develop a new dialect of English for this country", but for those who wish to speak the kind of English spoken by the best speakers in the Old Country. If we keep this aim in view, substituting "different" for "bad" or "corrupt" in many places in the book, we shall find Professor Wall a reliable observer of the main characteristics of New Zealand pronunciation. The greater part of the book is given up to discussion of a number of words of doubtful pronunciation, most of them submitted to Professor Wall for advice through the newspapers. Here, of course, he is dealing mostly with words of a limited currency, in the pronunciation of which usage is uncertain. In making his decisions Professor Wall uses the best "authorities" on pronunciation with discrimination and care; but in some instances too little regard is paid to New Zealand usage when it is by no means uncertain. To say that a pronunciation is universal in New Zealand, and then, on the authority of Fowler or the Oxford Dictionary or Daniel Jones, to describe it as incorrect, is surely quite wrong. It is certain that Professor Jones would regard this as a misuse of his *Pronouncing Dictionary*. Professor Wall gives New Zealand usage only a very grudging recognition when it does not accord with English usage as recorded by the "authorities". This, we feel, is wrong. But it agrees with Professor Wall's general purpose. He is one of the many who regret the divergent developments of English.

A. G. MITCHELL.

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## NOTES.

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THE following extract from a letter received by Mr. Berman from the Secretary of the English Association, Mrs. E. M. Fielding, will be of interest to members:

"In April and May the office of the Association suffered to the extent of windows being blown out, and my own home was rendered uninhabitable through a land mine. . . . One always feels after a bad blitz that 'it was bad but it might have been worse', and all our setbacks would appear much worse if we had not the encouragement and support from Overseas."

The Annual Report of the English Association draws attention to a serious decline in membership, and appeals for more support. A circular to this effect has also been issued.

It may be repeated here that every member of the Australian English Association is also a member of the English Association and so contributes to its finances. Every member who pays the extra 3s. for *English* and the annual Presidential Address is directly assisting.

Our own membership has shown an increase during the year. Once more, however, an appeal must be made on behalf of *Southerly*.



Members of the A.E.A., who for an annual subscription of 10s. 6d. receive three numbers of the magazine, together with a pamphlet, summaries of addresses, and the Annual Report of the Central Body, are particularly requested to help, by donation or by purchase of additional copies of *Southerly*. It may be suggested that the present number be sent to friends in Australia or abroad, supplied to men in the Services, and so on. All aid of this kind will tell.

The Summer number of *English* contains articles on "Translation" and "The Poetry of Robert Graves", by G. M. Young and E. C. Pettet, respectively; poems by Wilfrid Gibson and others; dramatic notes, reviews, and English Association notes and reports.

A reviewer of the July issue of *Southerly* remarks that "one gains the impression not of contributors fighting for space, but of editors fighting for contributions". It must be stated that this impression is incorrect. At times, certain writers have been requested to contribute, but there is always in hand far more material than can be used in any one issue, and a good deal more has to be returned as unsuitable for *Southerly*. For example, very few short stories submitted come up to the standard required—and even those included have poor luck with critics!

Subscribers to the *Meanjin Papers*, published every two months, are required. The price of each issue is 2s. (postage 1d.), and copies may be obtained from Mr. C. B. Christesen, Box 1871 W, G.P.O., Brisbane.

Mr. Sydney Musgrove's public lecture on *Julius Caesar* is now available in pamphlet form, price 1s. Members receive it free, but are asked to contribute this amount to help defray the cost of printing.

Extra copies of the general title-page for binding with the first four issues of *Southerly*, and of reprints from *The Union Recorder*, are obtainable, at 3d. each, from the Hon. Secretary.

Members are asked to notify the Hon. Secretary if they do not receive *Southerly* and other publications regularly.